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The Generation of Power. The History of Dneprostroi by Anne D. Rassweiler
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The Slavonic and East European Review, Vol. 68, No. 2 (Apr., 1990), p. 371
Published by: the Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4210330
Accessed: 15/06/2014 05:46

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Rassweiler, Anne D. *The Generation of Power. The History of Dneprostroi.* Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York, 1988. viii + 247 pp. Plates. Notes. Bibliography. Index. £24.00.

THE Soviet strategy of economic development involved the construction of large plants embodying best-practice foreign technology (at least in their basic processes) on green-field sites. The first of these bolshevik *stroiki* was Dneprostroi — the gigantic dam and hydroelectric station near Zaporozh'e; it was here that many of the details of the strategy were worked out. Anne Rassweiler has written a fascinating analytical history of this project.

It is Dr Rassweiler's contention that Stalinist patterns of development were not decided in Moscow alone, but by the decisions of thousands of engineers and other specialists, if not millions of ordinary peasants and workers. This book goes some way towards demonstrating that the problems posed by the building of this power-station, and the solutions found to them, exerted a significant influence on the future course of the Soviet economy — and that of Soviet society.

Along the way she casts an intriguing light on the political pressures involved in the selection of Dneprostroi, the absence of either an economic rationale or even a methodological framework for the evaluation of such major investment projects. Unfortunately, much of the motivation of key participants remains speculative; had she written the book in two or three years' time, she might have gained access to Party archives and resolved some of these questions.

The study does more than examine macro-political and economic issues. It provides some insight into the social history of the project. She brings out more clearly than previous accounts how the decision to compensate for poor productivity by the recruitment of additional labourers had a disastrous effect on living conditions at the site. She explores the way in which the wider political environment (the Shakhty trial, collectivization and so on) affected social relations and managerial effectiveness. Altogether a fascinating study.

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Connor, Walter D. *Socialism's Dilemmas: State and Society in the Soviet Bloc.* Columbia University Press, New York, 1988. x + 299 pp. Notes. $37.00.

NOT many scholars would care to publish a collection of their work on the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe over the last tumultuous decade: that Walter Connor has done so can be attributed both to his even-handed scholarship (no dire predictions of systemic collapse here) and a focus on questions that remain interesting and relevant.

These questions are by no means as broad as the title implies, however. Much of Connor's work concerns a search for the working class held so dear by Marxist ideology, with some attention to other social strata (dissidents and the intelligentsia). A newly written first chapter draws in larger concerns of theory of state and society, but the concept of state autonomy, for example, is not

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